

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 14579

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GW, PFOR

SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF THE OCTOBER 3 BUNDESTAG
ELECTION

REF: BONN 10967

BEGIN SUMMARY: ELECTION YEAR RHETORIC TO THE CONTRARY,
THE OCTOBER 3 BUNDESTAG ELECTION DOES NOT REPRESENT AN
HISTORIC POLITICAL TURNING POINT FOR THE FEDERAL REPUB-
LIC. A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT FROM THE SPD/FDP COALITION
TO THE CDU/CSU IS NOT LIKELY TO REVERSE WEST GERMANY'S
DOMESTIC OR FOREIGN POLICY, AT LEAST NOT IN THE NEXT
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FOUR YEARS. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A KOHL GOVERNMENT

AND THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT IS MORE LIKELY TO BE ONE
OF STYLE AND EMPHASIS THAN SUBSTANCE. END
SUMMARY.

1. AS THE 1976 BUNDESTAG ELECTION CAMPAIGN ENTERS THE
FINAL PHASE, CAMPAIGN RHETORIC MAKES IT APPEAR THAT THE
GERMAN VOTER IS FACED WITH AN HISTORIC CHOICE ON
OCTOBER 3, A CHOICE WHICH WILL FUNDAMENTALLY AFFECT THE
POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC:

-- THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS CLAIM THAT THE SPD
IS LEADING THE COUNTRY DOWN THE GARDEN PATH
TO SOCIALISM AT THE EXPENSE OF PERSONAL
FREEDOM, HENCE "FREIHEIT STATT SOZIALISMUS."

-- THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS CLAIM THAT THE
ACCESSION TO POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN PARTIES
(AND, WORSE, FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS) WILL
THREATEN SOCIAL HARMONY WITHIN THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC AND ENDANGER THE "MODELL
DEUTSCHLAND" WHICH HAS BEEN SO PAINSTAKINGLY
CONSTRUCTED SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE FRG
AND ESPECIALLY IN THE SPD YEARS.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT WEST GERMANY IS NOT IN DANGER OF
BECOMING A SOCIALIST STATE IF THE SOCIAL-LIBERAL
COALITION GOVERNS FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS, AND THAT
DOMESTIC TRANQUILLITY WILL NOT BE SEVERELY DISTURBED
SHOULD THE OPPOSITION TAKE OVER THE REINS OF GOVERNMENT.
BOTH ARE REALLY FALSE ISSUES AND INACCURATE IMAGES. THE
HARSH CAMPAIGN RHETORIC DOES NOT REFLECT REALITY BUT
SERVES AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR SERIOUS DEBATE ABOUT THE
SMALL POLICY DIFFERENCES THAT SEPARATE THE TWO OPPOSING
GROUPS.

3. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE PERSONAL-
ITIES AND POLITICAL INCLINATIONS OF THE TWO CHANCELLOR
CANDIDATES. KOHL AND SCHMIDT ARE NOT EXTREMISTS BUT
MEN OF STRONG CENTRIST POLITICAL BELIEFS WHO LEAD
BROADLY-BASED MODERATE POLITICAL PARTIES.
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4. A CDU/CSU MAJORITY IN THE BUNDESTAG AND BUNDESRAT
WILL SEEK LEGISLATIVE CHANGES THAT COULD PARTICULARLY
AFFECT GERMAN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS BUT COULD ALSO HAVE
SOME IMPACT ON GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY AND FOREIGN
RELATIONS. SOME OF THE CHANGES A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT
MIGHT ATTEMPT TO LEGISLATE ARE: TOUGHER LAWS TO DEAL
WITH TERRORISM; MORE CONSERVATIVE FISCAL AND ECONOMIC

PROPOSALS; SOLUTIONS THROUGH THE WORKINGS OF A FREE
MARKET ECONOMY RATHER THAN THROUGH THE CREATION OF NEW
GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS.

5. HOW FAR A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT WOULD GO IN MAKING
THESE CHANGES REMAINS OPEN TO QUESTION, HOWEVER. NOT
ONLY ARE THE UNION PARTIES THEMSELVES MODERATELY LIBERAL
BUT KOHL HAS STATED THAT HE WILL ASK THE FDP TO JOIN THE

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CDU/CSU IN COALITION EVEN IF THE UNION PARTIES RECEIVE

A SLIM MAJORITY ON OCTOBER 3. IF THE FDP DOES NOT JOIN, IT COULD BE EXPECTED THAT A KOHL GOVERNMENT WOULD FOLLOW A POLITICAL COURSE DESIGNED TO OBTAIN FDP SUPPORT IN THE FUTURE. SOCIAL-LIBERAL CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY, THE MAJORITY OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS DO NOT WISH TO DISMANTLE THE WIDE-REACHING GOVERNMENT SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS, MANY OF WHICH HAVE ROOTS GOING BACK TO BISMARCK'S SECOND REICH. MOREOVER, ONCE THE UNION PARTIES ARE IN GOVERNMENT, KOHL MAY BE LESS INTENSE IN COURTING THE SUPPORT OF THE CONSERVATIVE STRONGHOLDS IN

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BAVARIA AND BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG AND MORE LIKELY TURN TO HIS LIBERAL ADVISORS (E.G., VON WEIZSAECKER, BIEDENKOPF, ETC.)

6. AS FOR FOREIGN POLICY, THE CHANGES WHICH A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT ARE LIKELY TO MAKE ALSO WOULD NOT BE AS DRASTIC AS ELECTION CAMPAIGN STATEMENTS WOULD HAVE THEM. THERE IS NO MAJOR CHANGE IN SIGHT IN RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND WESTERN EUROPE. THE EASTERN TREATIES REMAIN THE LAW OF THE LAND (A FACT NOT TO BE UNDERESTIMATED IN THIS LEGALISTIC COUNTRY). A CDU GOVERNMENT MIGHT PRESS THE EASTERN COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY THE SOVIET UNION AND THE GDR, FOR MORE CONCESSIONS, BUT THERE ARE INHIBITING FACTORS WHICH WILL OPERATE ON CDU/CSU EASTERN POLICY. GERMAN BUSINESS FIRMS -- LIKE THE GERMAN TRADE UNIONS -- WELCOME THE PROFITABLE BUSINESS THAT THEY OBTAIN IN EASTERN EUROPE. MOREOVER, MANY GERMANS APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FAMILY REUNIONS AND EASTERN CONTACTS THAT THE AGREEMENTS OF THE LAST FEW YEARS HAVE GIVEN THEM.

7. AN IMPORTANT FACTOR AFFECTING GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS WILL BE THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. THE PARAMETERS OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY ALSO CIRCUMSCRIBE GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY. IF U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION SOUR, ANY FRG GOVERNMENT WOULD FIND ITS POLICIES TOWARDS THE USSR AFFECTED. IN THAT CASE, A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS NOT BEEN SO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH "OSTPOLITIK" AS THE SOCIAL-LIBERAL COALITION MIGHT FIND IT EASIER TO REVERSE THE PRESENT GERMAN POLICY TO MAKE IT MORE COMPATIBLE WITH U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. HOWEVER, IF THE PRESENT GLOBAL EAST-WEST RELATIONSHIP DOES NOT DETERIORATE, A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE LIKELY TO DEPART MATERIALLY FROM "OSTPOLITIK" AS WE KNOW IT.

8. A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE MORE VOCAL IN REACTING TO GDR PROVOCATIONS IN OR AROUND BERLIN OR ON THE BORDER,

BUT EVEN IN SUCH CASES THERE WOULD BE SEVERE LIMITS ON
WHAT IT COULD DO. IT COULD ALSO BE SO CAUTIOUS IN ITS
DEALINGS WITH THE EAST THAT IT COULD RETARD AND PERHAPS
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EVEN ARREST THE PROCESS OF DETENTE, BUT OBJECTIVE
REALITIES WOULD PROBABLY PUSH IT -- AND ITS EASTERN
INTERLOCUTORS -- TOWARD A RESUMPTION OF THAT PROCESS IF
THE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE IS CONGENIAL.

9. KOHL'S RECENT VISITS TO EASTERN EUROPE AND THE USSR
WERE INTENDED TO CONVINCE THE WARSAW PACT NATIONS THAT
A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT REJECT DETENTE AND WOULD
WISH TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE USSR AND
EASTERN EUROPE. HE HAS TOLD US AND OTHERS THAT HE
BELIEVED HIS INTERLOCUTORS UNDERSTOOD THIS AND WERE
PREPARED TO WORK WITH HIM.

10. MANY PROMINENT CDU POLITICIANS HAVE CLOSE PERSONAL
TIES TO THE UNITED STATES AND THE SENTIMENT IN THE PARTY
IS OVERWHELMINGLY PRO-AMERICAN. A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC
GOVERNMENT WOULD CERTAINLY SEEK CLOSE AND WARM
RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES, AND WOULD TRY TO
CONVEY THE IMPRESSION THAT IT WAS A CLOSER ALLY THAN
THE SPD/FDP COALITION. HOWEVER, A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT
IS, AFTER ALL, A GERMAN GOVERNMENT. IT COULD BE
EXPECTED JEALOUSLY TO PROTECT GERMAN ECONOMIC INTERESTS,
SUCH AS THE EXPORT OF GERMAN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. THE
CLOSE TIES OF THE CDU TO SEGMENTS OF GERMAN PRIVATE
INDUSTRY WOULD INSURE THAT A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GOVERN-
MENT WOULD GIVE VERY HIGH PRIORITY TO PROMOTING GERMAN
ECONOMIC INTERESTS, EVEN SHOULD SUCH INTERESTS COME INTO
CONFLICT WITH U.S. INTERESTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE
SPD/FDP COALITION HAS ALSO BEEN SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF
GERMAN INDUSTRY, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF THE RECESSION.

11. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF THE LEDGER, A CDU/CSU

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GOVERNMENT, IF PAST EXPERIENCE IS A GUIDE, IS LIKELY TO BE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC PRESSURES (E.G., THE BAVARIAN DAIRY FARMERS) THAN THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN. ON BALANCE, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT WOULD PRESENT A TOUGHER OR EASIER BARGAINING PARTNER ON ECONOMIC AND TRADE ISSUES. A CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT WOULD BE A SOMEWHAT STRONGER AND MORE VOCAL SUPPORTER OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. SUPPORT FOR A UNITED EUROPE IS AN ARTICLE OF FAITH IN THE UNION PARTIES. HOWEVER, THE FREEDOM OF ACTION FOR A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, AS IT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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FOR THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, WOULD BE LIMITED BY EXTERNAL EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS (E.G., FRENCH ATTITUDES) WHICH CONTINUE TO BE DETERMINING FACTORS IN THE PACE OF EUROPEAN POLITICAL INTEGRATION.

12. CLEARLY, THE STYLE OF A KOHL GOVERNMENT WOULD DIFFER CONSIDERABLY FROM THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT. THE VAST DIFFERENCES IN PERSONALITY AND BACKGROUND BETWEEN THE TWO CANDIDATES MAKE THEIR LEADERSHIP STYLES VERY DIFFERENT. IN ADDITION, KOHL WOULD REQUIRE SOME TIME ON THE JOB TO MAKE UP FOR HIS LACK OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE. HE IS, HOWEVER, INTELLIGENT, RELATIVELY FLEXIBLE AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, HE HAS DEMONSTRATED A TALENT FOR SURROUNDING HIMSELF WITH FIRST-RATE STAFF AND ADVISORS. IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT HE WILL EVER DEVELOP SCHMIDT'S EXPERTISE ON TECHNICAL DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC ISSUES BUT HIS TALENT FOR INTEGRATING CONFLICTING VIEWS AND LISTENING TO HIS ADVISORS WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS MAKING HIM AN EFFECTIVE CHANCELLOR.

13. KOHL'S MAJOR STRENGTH AS A POLITICIAN IS HIS KNOWLEDGE AND EXCELLENT INSTINCTS ABOUT HOW PEOPLE FUNCTION WITHIN A POLITICAL CONTEXT. HE COULD BE EXPECTED TO USE HIS CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL SKILLS TO ADVANTAGE WITHIN HIS CABINET AND IN THE BUNDESTAG SHOULD HE BECOME CHANCELLOR. HE MAY NOT IMPRESS OUTSIDERS AS MUCH AS THE INCUMBENT, ESPECIALLY AT THE OUTSET, BUT WITHIN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC HE ENGENDERS RESPECT AND A CERTAIN APPRECIATION FOR HIS PERSONAL QUALITIES. HE COULD, THEREFORE, BECOME AN EFFECTIVE NATIONAL LEADER EVEN IF HE DOES NOT, AT LEAST INITIALLY, PRESENT THE SAME IMAGE OF EFFICIENCY AND COMPETENCE THAT MARKS SCHMIDT.

14. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME ON OCTOBER 3, FEDERAL REPUBLIC POLICIES ARE NOT LIKELY TO CHANGE DIRECTION RADICALLY. WHOEVER WINS WILL GOVERN A COUNTRY THAT IS A LOYAL ALLY OF THE UNITED STATES. CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., FULL SUPPORT FOR A STRONG ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, AND COMMITMENT TO THE POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF EUROPE WILL REMAIN THE PILLARS OF GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY. IMPROVED

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RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST NATIONS WILL REMAIN A POLICY GOAL. AT THE SAME TIME, THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL RESTRAINTS AS WELL AS THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS WHICH MAKE WEST GERMAN NATIONAL INTERESTS DISTINCT AND ON OCCASION COMPETITIVE WITH U.S. POLICY OBJECTIVES, WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN THE FUTURE.

15. IN SUM, THE VALUES AND COMMON INTERESTS WHICH MAKE THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC A MAJOR ALLY OF THE UNITED STATES ARE MORE STRONG AND DURABLE THAN THOSE ISSUES UPON WHICH WE DIFFER, AND THIS FACT OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL LIFE WILL REMAIN NO MATTER WHO WINS THE 1976 BUNDESTAG

ELECTION.
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